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Chair: Mr. Stefanile (Vice-Chair) ..... (Italy)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda item 20: Sustainable development (A/67/341)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (A/67/206, A/67/348 and A/CONF.216/16)

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Statement by the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

1. **Mr. Gnacadja** (Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa), speaking via video link under agenda item 20 (e), introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 66/201 and the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, contained in section II of the note by the Secretary-General on the implementation of United Nations environmental conventions (A/67/295). The international community's effort to frame a policy response to the challenge of global sustainability in the wake of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) could not be more opportune as there was a pressing need for action. Without a commitment to restoring degraded land to a healthy and productive state, the rapidly growing demand for food, water and energy would claim more land, leading in turn to more deforestation and environmental degradation.

2. The key section of the report focused on the consideration of desertification, land degradation and drought at Rio+20, which had raised the profile of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa and its core mandate to a higher political level. In the Conference outcome document, "The future we want" (A/RES/66/288), world leaders had undertaken to strive to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world in the context of sustainable development, monitor such degradation at the national, regional and international levels and restore degraded land in arid, semi-arid and dry subhumid areas. The participants had also resolved to support the Convention and its 10-year strategy and to strengthen their implementation, including by mobilizing adequate, predictable and timely financial resources.

3. The participants had taken note of the decision, taken at the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, to establish an ad hoc working group, taking into account regional balance, to discuss specific options for the provision of scientific advice to the Parties. The matter would be discussed further at the second United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Scientific Conference, to be held in Fortaleza, Brazil, from 4 to 7 February 2013. The 2012 World Day to Combat Desertification had also been observed at the Conference.

4. The report mentioned the forthcoming High-level Meeting on National Drought Policy, to be held in Geneva from 11 to 15 March 2013, which was expected to provide practical insight into useful science-based actions for drought preparedness and risk management. In that context, the General Assembly might wish to endorse the world leaders'

unprecedented commitment to policy developments on issues relating to desertification, land degradation and drought at Rio+20 and to invite Member States and the United Nations system to fulfil those commitments as a matter of priority in order to accelerate progress towards sustainable development.

5. **Mr. Momeni** (Islamic Republic of Iran) drew attention to the Executive Secretary's recent visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran and asked how countries in his region might tackle the prevalent climatic phenomenon of dust and sandstorms.

6. **Mr. Gnacadja** (Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa) said that it was necessary to address the causes of sand and duststorms by restoring degraded land. To that end, regional cooperation in mitigation would be required, in addition to setting targets, identifying vulnerabilities and mainstreaming the relevant commitments into national planning and investment.

7. **Mr. Momeni** (Islamic Republic of Iran) requested additional information on the nature of potential cooperation between his region and international organizations, such as the Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification, in addressing the problem of duststorms and sandstorms.

8. **Mr. Gnacadja** (Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa) said that the secretariat of the Convention endeavoured to assist regions in their implementation of subregional and regional action plans on addressing desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. The next step would be to scale up the pace of implementation and the level of investment since the cost degradation exceeded that of preventive measures. In closing, he thanked the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Kuwait for organizing upcoming conferences to rally regional support for efforts to combat desertification and duststorms in the region.

9. **Mr. Guerber** (Switzerland) said that the launch, at Rio+20, of a negotiation process to define the format and organizational aspects of a universal intergovernmental high-level political forum that would replace the Commission on Sustainable Development must be followed up by defining the instruments and procedures that would fulfil the new forum's functions. It would therefore be necessary to set up a clear process that was coordinated with discussions on the reform of the Economic and Social Council and made the best use of the time and resources already allocated to the Commission. The discussions should begin as soon as possible.

10. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) should embark immediately on implementation of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, adopted at Rio+20. The composition and nomination process of the Framework's small board remained open and a simple procedure should suffice to nominate 10 experts. His delegation suggested that the task of reporting on the Framework should be assigned to the forum that would replace the Commission but remained open to further debate on the matter. A number of the Committee's draft resolutions would have to integrate Rio+20 follow-up measures. His Government welcomed the decision to strengthen UNEP through the introduction of universal membership in its governing body and the proposed increase in financial resources. More specific decisions would have to be taken by the UNEP Governing Council in 2013.

11. A coherent, risk-sensitive international approach must be reflected in the development framework beyond 2015 and the sustainable development goals. In working on such a complex issue as disaster risk reduction, development-related and humanitarian activities must re-evaluate their traditional division of labour; development stakeholders must learn more about disasters and humanitarians must rethink their engagement in preventive work.

12. **Mr. Haniff** (Malaysia) said that timely and effective implementation of the Rio+20 follow-up process was critical given the deteriorating state of the global environment and the extreme weather events resulting from climate change. There was a need for immediate action to set sustainable development goals, establish a high-level political forum for sustainable development, strengthen and upgrade UNEP and develop strategies for financing sustainable development. His delegation had already submitted proposals on those four key areas to the Committee. Other issues of importance included options for a technology transfer facilitation mechanism, climate change, food security, water and energy shortages,

disaster resilience, marine resources, job creation and the decision to convene the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in 2014. He urged the international community to provide the necessary support to ensure the success of that conference and its preparatory process. In implementing the outcome of Rio+20, the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and equity must remain the overarching framework for any arrangements.

13. His Government's efforts to promote sustainable development included the adoption of national development plans and a recently introduced New Economic Model, which took into account the three pillars of sustainable development in addition to its own three pillars of sustainability, inclusiveness and high income. Malaysia had also honoured and remained committed to the pledge it had made in 1992, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to maintain least 50 per cent of its land as perpetual forest cover. A large tract of the country's forests had been established as protected areas and its forest resources continued to be used in a sustainable manner. In addition, 44 of its islands had been established as marine parks; his Government accorded equal importance to economic growth and development and natural resource conservation.

14. At the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, held in Copenhagen in 2009, Malaysia had volunteered to reduce its carbon emissions per unit of GDP by up to 40 per cent by 2020, contingent upon the receipt of technology transfer and financial support from developed countries. While that goal had thus far proved elusive, his Government had promoted green technology by establishing the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water and providing financial assistance and fiscal incentives to Malaysian users and producers in order to promote the use of green technology and products and innovation in that field. His Government had also introduced a feed-in tariff system to promote the use of renewable energy with the aim of increasing its share in the fuel mix to 10 per cent by 2020.

15. Having significantly reduced the rates of child mortality and extreme poverty, Malaysia was currently on track to achieve all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in aggregate terms ahead of the 2015 deadline. The success of its poverty eradication programmes was a consequence of the successful power-sharing and political stability of the previous 55 years and the Government's strategic planning and effective implementation of economic programmes and investments in physical infrastructure, education and primary health-care services. A rural development initiative based on a land distribution scheme had elevated the quality of life of some 177,000 rural families, who now enjoyed household incomes substantially above the poverty line.

16. **Ms. Bajaña** (Nicaragua), speaking on behalf of the Central American Integration System, said that disaster risk reduction was of vital importance for the countries of the Central American Integration System (SICA), whose populations were greatly affected by natural disasters that led to inestimable loss of life and material and ecological devastation. National efforts to achieve sustainable development were similarly exposed to such threats and their disproportionate impact on infrastructure and agricultural production, compounded by climate change, adaptation, management, mitigation and risk reduction measures.

17. Committed to serving their peoples, the Heads of State and Government of the SICA countries had acted strategically to address that challenging situation by incorporating integrated risk management into all levels of national planning. Those efforts had strengthened such specialized institutions as the Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America and enhanced their ability to implement the Central American policy for integrated disaster risk management in support of countries. That regional framework helped to establish the link between political decisions and their implementation mechanisms by associating risk and economic management with social and environmental cohesion while guaranteeing respect for human rights and taking multiculturalism and gender equity into account.

18. The Regional Coordination Mechanism of Mutual Assistance in Natural Disasters allowed SICA members to respond in a prompt and timely fashion to emergency or disaster situations in one or more countries that required humanitarian assistance from other countries in the region. However, much remained to be done in order to reduce disaster risk, improve response to disasters and mitigate their impact on the

most vulnerable. He therefore called on the international community to maintain and, if possible, increase the level of assistance provided to the SICA countries in order to strengthen their institutions and processes. Recalling the widespread support for General Assembly resolution A/RES/66/9 on emergency humanitarian assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua following the October 2011 Pacific tropical depression E-12, he thanked Member States and other international partners, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), for their cooperation, assistance and solidarity in the aftermath of natural disasters in the region.

19. **Ms. Bunge** (Argentina) said that a country's duty to contribute to sustainable development was determined by its specific circumstances, current level of development and historical responsibility for environmental degradation. National sovereignty over natural resources lay at the intersection of the three pillars of sustainable development.

20. Her delegation was committed to bringing the processes launched at Rio+20 to fruition. Its activities during the current session would include preparing for the high-level political forum established in the Conference outcome document; strengthening UNEP; and setting the new sustainable development goals in an open, inclusive and transparent manner. Efforts to achieve those goals must be guided by international law and by the principles established in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and States must have the benefit of recent technological and scientific advances and the necessary resources. She expressed concern at the slow progress in establishing an open working group on the sustainable development goals and called on the Committee to discuss the matter. It would also be necessary to consider how to harmonize the future sustainable development goals with the MDGs.

21. All decisions taken by the Committee must be consistent with the commitments made at specific meetings, including the Conferences of Parties to the conventions on the environment. It was also essential to make production environment-friendly; environmental issues must not be used as a pretext for the imposition of trade barriers and restrictions or other arbitrary forms of discrimination.

22. **Mr. Andrade** (Brazil) said that the time had come to fulfil the commitments made at Rio+20, including establishment of the high-level political forum and the facilitation mechanism promoting the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies requested in paragraph 173 of the Conference outcome document. His delegation agreed that a report on that matter by a working group of the whole should be submitted to the General Assembly before the end of the current session and was confident that the constructive flexibility of all Member States would enable the intergovernmental process on the sustainable development goals to proceed to substantive deliberations in the near future.

23. His delegation was convinced that the convening of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in 2014 would renew the political commitment of the international community to addressing the issue of national and regional sustainable development, taking economic, social and environmental factors into account. In light of his Government's early support for universal membership in the UNEP Governing Council and for the provision of secure and adequate financial resources from the regular budget and voluntary contributions to the Programme, he welcomed the relevant decisions taken at Rio+20 and looked forward to their consolidation in the Committee's resolution on agenda item 20 (g).

24. His delegation also hailed the successful outcome of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Hyderabad from 8 to 19 October 2012, and reiterated its support for the new Executive Secretary of the Convention. In particular, decision 11/4 (Review of implementation of the strategy for resource mobilization, including the establishment of targets), adopted at the Conference, was crucial as it would enable developing countries to meet their biodiversity-related objectives at the national level. The increase in the budget of the Convention, established in decision XI/31 (Administration of the Convention and budget for the programme of work for the biennium 2013-2014), would allow its secretariat to fulfil the mandates adopted at the Conference of the Parties. Commending decision XI/18 (Marine and coastal biodiversity: sustainable fisheries and addressing adverse impacts of human activities, voluntary guidelines for environmental assessment, and marine spatial planning), he stressed that on matters relating to

areas beyond national jurisdiction, States parties should monitor the ongoing work of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to Study Issues Relating to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity Beyond Areas of National Jurisdiction.

25. His delegation looked forward to a meaningful outcome of the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, to be held in Doha from 26 November to 8 December 2012, including the adoption of a legally binding second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, and urged all parties to work together towards a successful conclusion to the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol and the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and to achieve progress on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action in order to strengthen implementation of the Convention.

26. **Mr. Tawlah** (Saudi Arabia) said that no one dimension of sustainable development, whether environmental, economic, or social, could be considered in isolation from the other two. Moreover, the commitments undertaken with regard to sustainable development since the World Summit on Sustainable Development must be approached as an integrated whole that encompassed the outcome of Rio+20 and the guidelines that the participants had set for the development agenda beyond 2015 with a view to supporting developing countries' efforts to achieve sustainable development and narrow the gap between North and South.

27. His Government spared no effort to integrate sustainable development policies into its domestic agenda. With regard to energy, it strove to stabilize global oil markets and cushion price shocks in order to foster continued economic growth and prevent price speculation. To that end, it sought to maintain dialogue between energy producers and consumers and hosted the secretariat of the International Energy Forum in Riyadh.

28. A leading energy supplier, Saudi Arabia worked to ensure that global energy needs were met; improved access to energy was crucial to poverty eradication and sustainable development. In that connection, the June 2008 Jeddah Energy Meeting had focused on providing energy to the poor in developing countries. The State was also increasing its investment in wind, solar and other forms of renewable energy and promoting the development of related technologies at such national research institutions as the King Abdullah University for Science and Technology. Measures had been adopted to expand the use of public transport in order to reduce energy consumption, and the recent establishment of the Saudi Centre for Energy Efficiency reflected his Government's commitment to optimizing the use and applications of energy.

29. His delegation shared the concerns expressed regarding global warming and supported efforts to protect the environment and prevent climate change, as evinced by its participation in international conferences on environmental matters and its accession to the Kyoto Protocol. Nevertheless, the international community must strike a balance between environmental concerns and economic and social needs. His delegation was alarmed by the selective policies adopted by some industrialized nations in order to limit the use of fossil fuels; that approach was neither applicable nor practical, especially in light of technologies such as carbon capture and storage, which facilitated cleaner use of fossil fuels. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change remained the primary framework for multilateral negotiations on that issue and any efforts to address the phenomenon of climate change must be made within that context in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

30. His delegation looked forward to successful conclusion of the eighteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, and particularly to agreement on the second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, and pledged to continue participating in global efforts to implement the Rio+20 outcome document, "The future we want", and to achieve economic and social development while ensuring environmental preservation.

31. **Mr. Islam** (Bangladesh) said that poorer countries must be adequately represented in the open working group on the sustainable development goals to be established pursuant to the Rio+20 outcome

document; he called on Member States to create an effective institutional framework for sustainable development at all levels and to provide the least developed countries with the means to implement it. The proven repercussions of climate change were reversing progress towards the internationally agreed development goals and disproportionately affecting the countries that were least equipped to cope with a changing global environment. Moreover, the particular needs of those countries were being overlooked in the search for international policy solutions and responses.

32. In light of that situation, his delegation called for the climate change discourse to be depoliticized in the interest of protecting the most vulnerable countries and for the developed and advanced developing countries to make and implement unilateral, unconditional commitments to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Resources must be mobilized and distributed equitably to meet adaptation-related needs and broaden the participation of the least developed countries in the clean development mechanism. The proposal to require developed countries to provide 0.5 to 1 per cent of their gross national income (GNI) in additional funds to combat climate change should be given serious consideration and Annex I parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change should provide additional financial support for implementation of the Nairobi Framework.

33. His delegation requested the secretariat of the Convention to establish a commission to identify environmentally damaging projects and provide guidance on how to decommission and dismantle them. The future climate change agreement must ensure that the least developed countries and other vulnerable countries had access to eco-friendly and cost-effective technologies, possibly by means of a technology transfer board.

34. The primarily rain-fed agriculture sector of the least developed countries was especially vulnerable to droughts, floods and other extreme weather events, compounding the challenges faced by those countries in their efforts to achieve the MDGs. In light of the food security dimension of that problem, any recovery plan must take into account the specific problems of rural areas, which were largely dependent on agriculture.

35. In the current global context, an international partnership on sustainable development was more necessary than ever. The developed countries must fulfil their commitment to allocate 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product (GDP) to official development assistance (ODA) and 0.2 per cent of their GNI to the least developed countries, whose external debts should be cancelled forthwith without discrimination or conditionality. Developed countries and developing countries in a position to do so must provide duty-free, quota-free market access to all products from the least developed countries, unilaterally and without discrimination. The current intellectual property regime must provide affordable access to appropriate technologies for growing climate-resilient crops; the least developed countries must receive assistance in the areas of disaster preparedness and climate-resilient development; access to finance must be provided for the rural poor; and a gender perspective must be incorporated into agriculture, land use and environmental management.

36. **Mr. Laguna** (Mexico) said that progress in implementing the Rio+20 outcome document and promoting a sustainable global development agenda were his delegation's main priorities at the current session of the General Assembly. Mexico supported implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, as well as the call to hold the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in 2014, and stressed that that Conference should build on the agreements reached at Rio+20.

37. At the current session, his delegation would support the activities of the International Strategy on Disaster Reduction and lead negotiations on disaster prevention and risk reduction, highlighting the need for investment in that area and for consensus on the modalities of the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in Japan in 2015. Mexico would also draw attention to the link between the process of defining a framework for disaster risk reduction and the development agenda beyond 2015.

38. His delegation would endeavour to promote, support and increase the visibility of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and its harmonization with the outcomes of the three Rio Conventions on biodiversity, climate change and desertification. His delegation welcomed the results of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which

Mexico had ratified in 2012, and called on other States to follow suit in order to hasten the entry into force of that important international instrument.

39. Agreements reached at Rio+20 had identified expanding cooperation with developing countries, especially in the areas of technology transfer, capacity-building and environmental policymaking, as one of the primary functions of UNEP; its Governing Council should emerge as the main United Nations forum for environmental issues.

40. **Ms. Nazaire** (Haiti) said that as both a small island developing State and a least developed country, Haiti attached the utmost importance to the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Mauritius Strategy. There was a pressing need to improve interagency cooperation in order to enable the United Nations system to provide those States with a coherent and coordinated development programme. In her country's experience, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) was a step in the right direction in terms of improved coordination among agencies in the field and of the extent to which her Government's priorities were taken into account.

41. The Small Island Developing States Unit of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs had insufficient resources, despite its central role in the coordination of activities pertaining to those States within the Organization. United Nations agencies' efforts to bolster institutional capacity through data collection and to establish regional networks for information-sharing as part of their role in ensuring implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy were indispensable to any successful environmental policy.

42. In spite of its technical and financial limitations, Haiti was contributing to the effort to make the Caribbean sea a protected area with a view to creating a marine biological corridor. It was also exploring ecotourism and cultural tourism as potential bases for building a green economy in the region.

43. Turning to the issue of food security, she noted that her Government had established a free universal education programme and social safety nets to protect citizens from extreme poverty in 2011.

44. Preventing and mitigating climate change were key elements of her Government's sustainable development policy. Haiti's minimal plant cover left it especially vulnerable to hurricane activity and as an island, it faced the particular dangers of rising sea levels, deterioration of coral reefs and loss of biodiversity. Moreover, in the wake of the material and economic devastation wrought by the 2010 earthquake, the implementation of a disaster prevention strategy based on the Hyogo Framework for Action had taken on new urgency.

45. The agenda of UNDP and other agencies active in Haiti focused on strengthening the resilience of cities and people in the event of a disaster. The extent of the earthquake damage, which had been largely a consequence of overpopulation, uncontrolled real estate development and the absence of building standards, highlighted the need for urban planning that took geological specificities into account. While awaiting the assistance promised in the aftermath — assistance that, in many instances, had yet to materialize — her Government continued to learn valuable lessons from the catastrophic event. In closing, she hailed the report of the Secretary-General on harmony with nature (A/67/317), a concept that laid the groundwork for the international community's goal of achieving sustainable development.

46. **Mr. Ngculu** (South Africa) said that South Africa aspired to be a sustainable, economically prosperous and self-reliant nation that managed its ecological resources responsibly and advanced effective and efficient integrated planning and governance through national, regional and global collaboration. The agreement on preliminary consideration of the development agenda beyond 2015, reached at Rio+20, had also called for renewed commitment to achievement of the MDGs, which should be strengthened through the proposed new sustainable development goals with poverty eradication as the overarching objective. While all the Goals carried the same weight, Goals 1 (Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger) and 7 (Ensure environmental sustainability) best illustrated the link between people and the environment. A great deal could be achieved in combating hunger and ensuring access to safe drinking water and sanitation in the two years remaining before the MDG review process began.

47. A green economy was only one of the tools at the international community's disposal in its effort to achieve the broader objective of sustainable development. Green economy policies should be

underpinned by national priorities; social, economic and environmental development imperatives; and internationally agreed development goals. As developing countries needed to use natural resources in order to meet their development needs, sustainable consumption and production were a critical component of resource efficiency. The developed countries must take the lead in promoting sustainable consumption and production and transferring the appropriate technology in order to allow the developing countries to develop sustainably. With equity as a guiding principle, the framework for a green economy should ensure a fair allocation of effort, cost and benefit while addressing disproportionate vulnerabilities, responsibilities and capabilities.

48. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Member States had agreed that the institutional framework for sustainable development should take into consideration the progress made since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which had called for measures to strengthen institutional frameworks and make them responsive to country needs, a position affirmed at Rio+20. There was thus a need to agree on clear timeframes for developing and strengthening institutional arrangements at the international level in order to meet existing commitments to sustainable development.

49. As the new Chair of the Group of Like-minded Megadiverse Countries, South Africa was committed to pursuing efforts to reverse the decline in biodiversity, which had the greatest impact on poor people in developing countries. It was heartening to note that at Rio+20 and at the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, States had undertaken to ensure enhanced coordination, alignment and collaboration among United Nations agencies in order to accelerate achievement of the goals set out in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In that connection, he called on all States parties to the Convention to ratify the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity as soon as possible in order to allow the instrument to become operational no later than 2014.

50. **Mr. Kushneruk** (Ukraine) said that progress in promoting sustainable development and eradicating poverty had varied from region to region and from country to country. With the achievement of several MDGs at risk, the challenges threatening the most vulnerable countries called for an urgent response; even middle-income countries' efforts to achieve sustainable development faced serious constraints and required the support of the international community.

51. His Government commended the agreement to develop a more coherent institutional framework for United Nations environmental activities by strengthening the mandate of UNEP and the commitment to establish a universal intergovernmental forum to replace the Commission on Sustainable Development as a mechanism for reviewing progress in meeting all sustainable development commitments. He hoped that the process would culminate in the establishment of a world environment organization under the auspices of the United Nations.

52. His delegation reiterated its willingness to work closely with other Member States to define a set of sustainable development goals beyond 2015. Noting that a green economy was one of the most important tools to achieve sustainable development, he affirmed his Government's commitment to attaining the goals of the Green Industry Platform launched by the United Nations International Development Organization (UNIDO), UNEP and other partner organizations in the margins of Rio+20.

53. Efforts to implement the Rio+20 outcome document, "The future we want", were already under way in his country, where immediate priorities included revitalization of the National Sustainable Development Council. A national plan of action on the environment for the period 2011 to 2015 constituted a policy framework for addressing environmental challenges, while a national programme on domestic production development served as a policy tool for sustainable production based on the principles of the green economy.

54. Aware that action on climate change remained critical, his Government had undertaken to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent by 2020 during the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. As future Chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2013, Ukraine would promote discussion of the environmental impact of energy-related activities and the use of renewable energy sources. In 2011, his Government had updated its energy strategy to ensure that its

international obligations were met, including those arising from Ukraine's membership in the Energy Community.

55. Despite initial difficulties, the steps taken with a view to a more rational use of energy had already reaped both environmental and economic benefits. His Government recognized the role of renewable energy in ensuring the sustainability of the energy sector and had implemented a number of important solar and wind energy projects in 2011.

56. **Mr. Monthienvichienchai** (Thailand) said that the creation of a common, balanced and comprehensive development agenda beyond 2015 required a people-centred, inclusive process that would garner the broadest possible international support. It was important to build on the gains made under the MDGs framework with poverty eradication as a high priority. The development needs of middle-income countries, where the majority of the world's poor lived, should also be taken into account. The new development agenda should emphasize sustained and inclusive economic growth that focused on creating productive and meaningful jobs, particularly for the young, bearing in mind the intergenerational aspect of development. Providing access to quality education for all would be vital in creating valuable human capital, thereby reducing social inequality. The food, energy and water security nexus must be considered so as to avoid rushing into development efforts that would result in environmental degradation and unduly encumber future generations.

57. Since substantial gains in sustainable development might be reversed overnight by increasingly frequent large-scale natural disasters, the development agenda beyond 2015 should also incorporate disaster risk reduction and preparedness in order to build resilience and responsiveness to such emerging global challenges. Economic progress did not automatically lead to social stability or environmental sustainability; global efforts to combat social and economic inequalities must continue relentlessly. Access to basic health care should be a universal right and marginalized groups, including women, should be empowered to fulfil their potential. Society must rid itself of corruption, human trafficking and other transnational organized crimes, and the rule of law and good governance must be strengthened in order to ensure accountability, transparency and equality and to guarantee the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

58. **Mr. Alemu** (Ethiopia) said that his delegation attached great importance to the establishment of an open working group on the sustainable development goals and an intergovernmental committee on sustainable development financing based on equitable geographical representation pursuant to the Rio+20 outcome document. The role of UNEP as the leading global environmental authority also needed to be strengthened. Successful implementation of the outcome document, "The future we want", hinged on the provision of adequate resources to developing countries, in particular the least developed among them, by fulfilling the commitments made in various forums and closing the gap in the delivery of ODA. All countries must adhere to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and complement the efforts of developing countries through financing, technology transfer and capacity-building. His own country would require such support in order to make the transition to a green economy, thereby reducing environmental damage.

59. Although Africa had contributed the least to climate change, the region was suffering the most from its adverse effects, which hindered efforts to achieve food security, poverty reduction and sustainable development. Adequate, predictable and sufficient funding in support of African countries' practical adaptation actions would be crucial in reducing disaster risk and building resilience in their communities. In that regard, the financial commitments made in 2009 at the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference must be fulfilled and the Green Climate Fund must be made operational immediately in order to address the funding deficit.

60. Convinced that access to reliable, affordable and sustainable energy was essential to reducing poverty, empowering vulnerable groups and promoting sustainable development, Ethiopia had undertaken ambitious renewable energy projects, as evinced by the increase in electricity generation from renewable energy sources in recent years. Currently, more than 47 per cent of the population had access to electric power and his Government planned to extend access to modern energy to 75 per cent of the population by 2030. Through massive investment in energy infrastructure, Ethiopia aimed to reach middle-income status by 2025 based on carbon-neutral growth.

61. **Mr.** Masood **Khan** (Pakistan) said that while the outcome of Rio+20 had not met all of the international community's expectations, it had yielded a number of institutional arrangements and policy prescriptions, in addition to promoting the need for sustainable development goals and presenting the first-ever international framework on a green economy, a meaningful achievement in the light of global circumstances. His delegation was concerned at the ongoing political disputes on key issues that, in its view, had been settled at Rio+20. Noting with dismay that the open working group mandated to set the sustainable development goals had yet to be established, he urged all countries to exhibit flexibility and move beyond political positions in order to begin that important work. He welcomed the initiative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to establish an inter-agency support unit for the open working group and urged the Department to consider seeking secondment from other key international organizations in order to benefit from their breadth of experience.

62. It was perplexing that the process of establishing a similar working group on financing strategy, a matter of the utmost urgency, was being held hostage to other decisions. He requested the President of the General Assembly to initiate the process of securing nominations from regional groups and expressed the hope that the working group would be able to begin its activities early the following year.

63. While the High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda had an important and useful role to play, the exclusivity of its composition should not become the norm in other initiatives.

64. The agreement to strengthen UNEP fell short of what his delegation, a consistent advocate of the international environmental governance process, would have hoped. The international community should nonetheless complete its implementation at an early date with the provision of additional resources from the regular budget of the Organization and voluntary contributions.

65. The intensity and ferocity of recent climatic events suggested that anthropogenic gases had played a role in climate change, the world's most serious development emergency. Following the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, held in Durban from 28 November to 9 December 2011, negotiations on a new climate change framework had commenced with a view to implementation of the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action. That process was expected to result in a new instrument for the climate change regime beyond 2020.

66. As an energy-deficient country that was particularly vulnerable to the adverse impact of climate change, Pakistan had a vested interest in promoting access to sustainable, modern energy for all. He was therefore pleased to confirm that his Government would associate itself with the Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative. His Government was also sympathetic to the special needs of the small island developing States and would continue to support them, through the Mauritius Strategy framework, in their efforts to meet the challenges posed by a difficult global economic environment compounded by rising temperatures and sea levels as a result of climate change. The most recent natural disasters underlined the need for a high level of coordination and a sophisticated early warning system as part of the disaster risk reduction strategy at the national and international levels. In closing, he urged the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), UNEP, UNDP and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to review their operational and procedural modalities in a rapidly changing global environment.

67. **Mr. Jawhara** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that achieving sustainable development would require a number of practical steps and sincere political will to abide by the commitments agreed at Rio+20 and other international conferences. The root causes of obstacles to poverty eradication and sustainable development must be addressed. First, the international community must make every effort to put an end to the scourge of occupation, which remained the primary hindrance to the exercise of the legitimate right of peoples living under occupation to sustainable development and life with dignity. Second, certain countries and regional entities must halt the imposition of unilateral economic, trade and financial sanctions on developing countries, outside a legitimate international framework, for the purpose of political coercion. And, lastly, the developed countries must meet their historical commitments with regard to the developing countries

according to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

68. For the seventh consecutive year, the Committee's consideration of the draft resolution on the oil slick that had spread over the entire Lebanese coast as a result of Israel's premeditated bombing of the oil storage tanks in the direct vicinity of the Jiyeh electric power plant during the Israeli aggression against Lebanon in the summer of 2006 (A/C.2/67/L.13) had made no progress, despite repeated General Assembly resolutions calling on Israel to assume its responsibility to provide prompt and adequate compensation to the Government of Lebanon and other countries directly affected by the oil slick, such as the Syrian Arab Republic. Having borne the brunt of the burden of cleaning and restoring the contaminated shores with no international assistance, relying only on regional support, his Government reserved the right to estimate the cost of repairing the environmental, economic and social damage.

69. Israel's failure to implement the relevant General Assembly resolutions, in blatant defiance of the will of the international community, was part and parcel of its policy of non-compliance with international resolutions and proof that it considered itself above the law. During the current session, the Assembly must therefore make every effort to convey to Israel its clear condemnation and outright rejection of such hostile and irresponsible behaviour and reiterate the demand that Israel assume responsibility for providing Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic with prompt and adequate compensation for the environmental damage caused by the spread of the oil slick. The Committee, for its part, should reject Israel's attempts to disguise its non-compliance by submitting draft resolutions on sustainable development and should pressure it to comply with international resolutions and to provide compensation.

70. **Mr. McLay** (New Zealand) said that although the Rio+20 outcome document was not perfect, many of his delegation's priorities, in particular the sustainable management, conservation and protection of oceans, had been addressed in the final text, which represented real progress in that area. Although stronger language would have been ideal, his delegation was also pleased with the reference to fossil fuel subsidy reform, which played an important role in freeing up resources to finance sustainable development and eradicate poverty. At the current session, with the work programme set by the outcome document in hand, the Committee should adopt substantive resolutions that built on that document without losing sight of the overarching objective: sustainable development that integrated the economic, social and environmental dimensions.

71. He welcomed the decision to hold the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in Samoa but stressed that the Cook Islands and Niue, which were not Member States of the United Nations and had thus been excluded from Rio+20, must be allowed to participate in that Conference and in others that directly concerned their future as States. His delegation would continue to raise that issue in relation to other draft resolutions on conference modalities, as necessary.

72. Renewable energy was another priority for his country, which, with 74 per cent of its domestic electricity currently generated from renewable sources, was on track to meet the Government's target of 90 per cent renewable electricity generation by 2025. Energy was also an increasingly important focus in its development programme given the high cost of using imported diesel to generate electricity. New Zealand currently supported solar power projects in Tokelau, the Cook Islands and Tonga and was willing to share its expertise in developing and using renewable energy acquired over the previous century with other countries, particularly developing States.

73. Recognizing the important progress on the global response to climate change that had been made at the 2011 Durban Climate Change Conference, he reaffirmed his Government's commitment to working constructively with all parties at the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol in order to conclude that phase of work and begin work on the new instrument under the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action. The institutional framework for sustainable development must also be addressed by the Committee, particularly in the draft resolution on the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, in the form of practical, achievable and effective reforms.

74. **Mr. Takahashi** (Japan) said that his Government was committed to engaging actively in the processes set in motion by Rio+20, including the formulation of

new sustainable development goals. To that end, Japan had been hosting the Post-MDGs Contact Group in order to discuss the development agenda beyond 2015 informally and was represented on the High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda by former Prime Minister Naoto Kan.

75. Green Future Initiatives, Japan's domestic sustainable development programme, was composed of three distinct initiatives, including one on cooperation in disaster risk reduction, an issue to which his country attached particular importance. Despite the magnitude of the March 2011 earthquake, Japan's high building standards and rail network earthquake detection and alarm system had kept the destruction of infrastructure to a minimum. His Government considered it a duty to share with the international community the lessons learned from that disaster, chief among them that it was crucial to incorporate disaster risk reduction into development policy in order to make economic growth sustainable. The notion of human security should be a guiding principle in mainstreaming disaster reduction into policymaking and building resilient societies. Japan had announced its intention to host the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015 and awaited the Committee's approval so that it might proceed with preparations.

76. In order to address the issue of climate change, regional and bilateral efforts to reduce greenhouse gases must persist. Japan's activities in that area included the East Asia Low Carbon Growth Partnership Dialogue and flexible market mechanisms. Given the importance of energy to sustainable development and climate change, his Government was keen to mobilize all possible policy resources to serve as a model for a balanced shift toward green energy and economic growth.

77. Following the successful conclusion of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, his delegation emphasized the importance of implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and putting the Nagoya Protocol into effect as soon as possible.

78. **Mr. Hamilton** (Malta) said that his Government was proud to have proposed the draft resolution adopted as General Assembly resolution 43/53 entitled "Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind", which had led to negotiations resulting in the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, to which Malta was a party. As a small island State, Malta was acutely aware of the effects of climate change and had adopted a national environment policy aimed at harmonizing its environmental activities with its international obligations. In line with regional predictions, the State's climate was becoming slightly drier and warmer, and the island's vulnerability to sea-level rise and extreme climatic events were of particular concern. Domestic reforms would target the energy sector, which had accounted for 91 per cent of the country's greenhouse gas emissions in 2008. Like other member States of the European Union, Malta was bound by the commitments contained in its national reform programme under the Europe 2020 Strategy, which included pledges to reduce energy consumption and increase the share of energy derived from renewable resources.

79. The recently adopted Sustainable Development Act had introduced the notion of protecting the interests of future generations, who stood to benefit the most from present-day efforts to prevent climate change. To that end, a new body, the Guardian of Future Generations, had been established to safeguard intergenerational and intragenerational sustainable development by, inter alia, promoting sustainable development advocacy across national policymaking, legislation and practices and encouraging the participation of non-governmental organizations in sustainable development advocacy.

80. **Mr. Mamani** (Bolivia) said that his delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on harmony with nature (A/67/317) and the recent launch of the Harmony with Nature website, which would promote the integration of that theme and of traditional knowledge into interdisciplinary scientific work. Far from creating conditions conducive to environmental preservation and halting overconsumption in industrialized nations, the current economic model had unleashed unprecedented environmental degradation and the developed countries' consumption of the planet's resources had exceeded its capacity to replenish them. There could be no hope of attaining harmonious balance with nature in a world where 1 per cent of the population possessed 50 per cent of the planet's wealth. It would be necessary to ascertain what human beings' obligations to nature were and to recognize that the rights of the natural realm must be

promoted and protected; merely regulating the impact of human activity on nature using the rules of the capitalist market would not suffice.

81. His Government opposed manipulation of the "green economy" concept to transform natural resources into commodities subject to the dictatorship of the market, which privatized wealth while socializing poverty. What had emerged was a form of environmentalism that placed on countries of the South the burden of protecting the very environment that was being destroyed by the capitalist economy.

82. His Government had recently enacted legislation on integrated development and living well and in harmony with Mother Earth, and it looked forward to working with the other members of the Group of 77 and China to implement the sustainable development agenda set out at Rio+20.

83. **Mr. Ferguson** (Australia) said that his delegation welcomed the focus of the Rio+20 outcome document on improving the conservation and sustainable management of ocean resources, which were crucial to the livelihoods and food security of millions of island and coastal inhabitants. It was crucial for countries to work together to fulfil their commitment to refrain from introducing or extending subsidies that contributed to overfishing and overcapacity, reduce marine pollution, meet the enormous challenge of ocean acidification and address ocean governance issues for marine areas beyond national jurisdiction.

84. Tools for measuring sustainable development should better reflect progress in the economic, environmental and social fields and should include indicators other than GDP. Efforts to improve those tools should make use of experience at the national and international levels; for example, Australia's Measuring Sustainability programme provided decision makers with better information on how the economy, the environment and society interacted.

85. Innovative ways to reduce and manage disaster risk could be found if countries would analyze the causes and quantify and communicate the potential losses from natural hazards. In order for future development efforts to be sustainable, they must take into account the risks of natural disasters and climate change. Sharing risk information with the private sector and the wider community would help empower people to take action to protect their lives and livelihoods from disasters. In that context, the different needs of vulnerable people should be recognized and the participation of women, children and people with disabilities in the search for solutions should be encouraged.

86. Australia remained committed to achieving the MDGs by 2015 and was intensifying its efforts to support achievement of the Goals in the region and across the world. Aware that much remained to be done, his Government had been expanding its aid programme steadily since the beginning of the millennium. His delegation welcomed the contributions of the High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and looked forward to working with other countries to further develop that agenda, which must remain focused on poverty eradication.

87. His delegation was committed to ensuring that the sustainable development goals were integrated effectively into the development agenda beyond 2015 in a manner that addressed the three pillars of sustainable development equally. The new goals should be part of a comprehensive framework for sustainable development comprising not only the goals themselves, but also a set of indicators, an information base to enable the measurement of progress and an institutional framework to support their implementation.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.